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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3171
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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 5074
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JAN 3934
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RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO PRIORITY 2743
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000154

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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H FOR CINDY CHANG
WHA/BSC FOR DOUGLAS BARNES

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PARM](#) [AR](#) [SNAR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: LABOR SECRETARY CHAO MEETINGS WITH
LABOR MINISTER TOMADA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On January 11, U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao paid a courtesy call on Argentine Labor Minister Carlos Tomada. Secretary Chao took the opportunity to speak about the benefits of free trade, noting that free trade was the best way for Argentina to achieve the goals of continued economic growth and lower unemployment. Secretary Chao asked Minister Tomada about his views of Mercosur, and Tomada described Mercosur as a vehicle to integrate Argentina with the rest of the world. Secretary Chao and Minister Tomada said they looked forward to seeing each other at the next ILO meeting in Geneva and Tomada said he wanted to visit Secretary Chao in Washington at some point in the future.

SIPDIS
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 11, U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, accompanied by DCM and POL officer (notetaker), paid a courtesy call on Argentine Labor Minister Carlos Tomada. Minister Tomada thanked Secretary Chao for taking the time to meet with him, recognizing that the Secretary was traveling in an unofficial capacity while accompanying her husband, Senator Mitch McConnell, on his fact-finding mission to Argentina. Secretary Chao thanked Minister Tomada for his time and noted the impressive Argentine economic recovery during the past three years. Secretary Chao said that the U.S. supports Argentina's efforts to strengthen its democracy and hopes Argentina's economy continues to improve.

¶3. (SBU) Secretary Chao took the opportunity to speak about the benefits of free trade and to encourage Argentina to "keep an open mind" with regards to free trade opportunities. Minister Tomada said that Argentina's economy was "open," but that the GOA was focused on economic growth with employment. Minister Tomada said that in the past Argentina had suffered from "brutal openness" and economic growth without employment. Secretary Chao noted that even though the openness of the U.S. economy allows some jobs to be outsourced overseas, the U.S. is a large net winner of jobs due to free trade, with millions of Americans working for foreign companies operating on U.S. soil. Secretary Chao said that the U.S. believes that free trade is one of the

best ways to achieve economic growth and greater employment.

¶4. (SBU) Secretary Chao asked Minister Tomada about his views of Mercosur, and Tomada described Mercosur as a vehicle to integrate Argentina with the rest of the world. Tomada said that Argentina strongly supported the regional integration of Mercosur, but noted that Argentina wanted to avoid "disequilibriums" in the trade bloc at the same time. Minister Tomada said that Mercosur helps to reinforce democracy and peace, in addition to its trade benefits.

¶5. (SBU) Secretary Chao congratulated Argentina on assuming the presidency of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and said she looked forward to seeing Minister Tomada at the next ILO meeting in Geneva. Minister Tomada said he also looked forward to seeing Secretary Chao in Geneva and said he wanted to visit Secretary Chao in Washington at some point in the future.

¶6. (SBU) CODEL McConnell has cleared this cable.

GUTIERREZ